

VZCZCXRO3455
OO RUEHIK RUEHLN RUEHPOD RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTH #1432 2841443
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 101443Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2627
INFO RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS ATHENS 001432

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [EUN](#) [PHUM](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREEK VIEWS ON OCTOBER GAERC ISSUES

REF: SECSTATE 108064

1. (SBU) DepPolCouns and visiting EUR/SE Desk Officer Goodman delivered reftel points to MFA European Correspondent Antonia Katzourou. Her responses below are keyed to the main issue topics of the demarche:

-- ZIMBABWE: Katzourou did not expect a long discussion. Conclusions had already been formulated. The EU intended to keep its sanctions in place but would review, if circumstances so warranted.

-- GEORGIA: The French FM was currently in Georgia investigating Russian troop withdrawals and would report back to the GAERC. Greece was now focused on the upcoming Geneva conference. Katzourou said she had seen no discussion of possible travel restrictions on Abkhaz and South Ossetian "officials" and believed the EU was not now considering such restrictions. Attention was on the question of Russian troop withdrawals.

-- BELARUS: There were divergent views within the EU on this question. Greece believed that the elections clearly were not up to international standards. At the same time, there had been some positive developments, such as the release of prisoners and allowing international observers for the elections. The Belarusian FM was scheduled to meet with the Troika. Greece believed this would be a good time to lift some visa bans on select individuals. Such a step would provide greater opportunities for contacts. An asset freeze, however, should remain. Other EU members, such as the Dutch, were strongly against lifting a visa ban for Lukashenka. DepPolCouns reminded Katzourou of the risk that Lukashenka was creating the appearance of positive movement with no intention of following through. Katzourou responded that this concern was very much on EU minds.
SPECKHARD